



Congressman Hinojosa: Working to Strengthen America's Economy

Congressman Hinojosa is committed to revitalizing America's economy:

✓ Stimulating the Economy

More than 130 million households received a recovery rebate check between May and July thanks to an agreement that Congressman Hinojosa supported. The legislation put hundreds of dollars into the hands of individual Americans to stimulate an economic recovery.

✓ Raising the Minimum Wage

Congressman Hinojosa voted to enact the first federal minimum wage increase in almost a decade, directly helping an estimated 5.3 million Americans. In July, a 70-cent increase brought the minimum wage to \$6.55. When fully phased-in, the minimum wage will reach \$7.25, putting an additional \$4,400 in workers' pockets.

✓ Extending Unemployment Aid

Hinojosa supported legislation that extends unemployment insurance benefits for 3.8 million Americans for up to 13 more weeks. The bill not only helps struggling Americans, it helps our economy - every \$1 in benefits generates \$1.64 in new economic demand. The President has signed the bill and checks have begun arriving in the mail.



Top: Congressman Hinojosa discusses the importance of reading with students at Lenoir Elementary School in Donna, Texas.



Bottom: Congressman Hinojosa breaks ground with other officials at the construction site of the Donna-Rio Bravo International Bridge.

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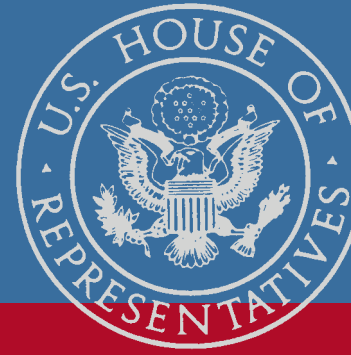
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Rubén Hinojosa
M.C.
Presorted Standard



Economic Update

from Congressman Rubén Hinojosa

Congressman Rubén Hinojosa Working to Strengthen America's Economy



For Residents Affected by Hurricane Dolly

If you need help in the aftermath of Hurricane Dolly, please contact our **Edinburg or Beeville offices.**

Other numbers for questions regarding Hurricane Dolly:

Governor's Hotline:
2-1-1 or 1-888-312-4567

FEMA:
1-800-621-FEMA (3362)

Hidalgo County:
956-318-2600

Cameron County:
956-544-0830

Dear Friends:

South Texas and Coastal Bend residents are confronting a hard reality as they pull up to the pumps. With gas at record highs, parents can barely afford to take their kids to the pool, much less on vacation. As our families recover from Hurricane Dolly, they should not have to also suffer every time they go to fill up. I will continue to work in Congress to bring more relief to our residents who are already struggling to make ends meet.

Texans deserve a smart and effective energy plan. That is why my colleagues and I have come forward with real solutions, both immediate and long-term, to bring gas prices down.

First, we voted to **temporarily suspend the filling of the Strategic Petroleum Reserve**, the nation's emergency supply of crude oil. The Reserve is already at 97% capacity, and experts project that a halt to government stockpiling may temporarily lower gas prices.

Second, we passed legislation that **instructs the Commodity Futures Trading Commission to use its authority to stop excessive speculation**. Rampant speculation has been cited as distorting the energy market and one cause of the spike in prices.

Third, we are **giving mass transit authorities \$1.7 billion in grants** in order to expand transit services in both rural and urban areas.

Fourth and finally: Congress passed a landmark bill that **invests in alternative fuels** and ensures that, in 12 years, the average car will get 35 miles per gallon. In one year alone, that will save Americans \$22 billion at the pump.

These are the first steps of a comprehensive plan that we are developing to bring down gas prices—not just this summer, but for years to come. As you read this update, you will learn about other actions we are taking to ensure that our nation remains the world's leading economic powerhouse.

Sincerely,

Rubén Hinojosa



Economic Update

Congressman
Rubén Hinojosa

Congressman Rubén Hinojosa is Fighting to Increase Opportunities for All Texans

Increasing Economic Development in the Rio Grande Valley

Over the past several years, I have been working with the Economic Development Administration to obtain \$3.1 million for a unique project called the Mercado Delta. I am pleased to report that the project is finally under construction and is rapidly moving toward completion.

When completed, the multi-purpose marketplace will serve as an area where local businesses and artisans can sell locally-produced and imported goods. The anchor for showcasing local produce will be a farmer's market, which will have space available for two hundred vendors.

This much-anticipated development reflects the hard work of so many area residents and sends a powerful message of what is possible when we work together. Once finished, the Mercado Delta will create a boom in development, more jobs, and increased opportunity so that Edcouch, Elsa, La Villa, Monte Alto, and the surrounding communities can prosper for years to come.



Congressman Hinojosa participates in the groundbreaking ceremony for the future Mercado Delta with Delta Regional Revitalization Corp. Board President Dr. Ricardo Gonzalez, Mia Quintanilla, and Board Member Jorge Saenz.

Helping Texas Homeowners

The mortgage crisis impacts all of us. Thousands of families have lost their homes, millions more are on the brink of foreclosure and have seen their property values plummet.

In July, my colleagues and I acted swiftly to pass the most comprehensive response yet to the American mortgage crisis. **H.R. 3221, The Housing and Economic Recovery Act of 2008**, will help families keep their homes and get our economy back on track.

First, this bill allows hard-working American families in danger of losing their home to refinance into lower-cost government-insured mortgages they can afford to repay. Second, it expands homeownership opportunities for veterans and helps returning soldiers avoid foreclosure and stay in their home.

Finally, the bill creates a new fund to boost the nation's stock of affordable rental housing and offers tax credits to families to spur home buying. I am pleased to report that the President has signed this critical bill into law and our actions will immediately begin working toward a recovery in our housing market.

Economic Development through Education

As the Chairman of the U.S. House Higher Education Subcommittee, I firmly believe that education is the key to our continued economic success. Our Committee has been working hard to expand access and affordability in higher education and I am proud to announce that for the first time in 10 years we have reauthorized the Higher Education Act.

H.R. 4137, The Higher Education Opportunity Act, the reauthorization of the Higher Education Act, takes significant steps to improve our student aid delivery system, ensure the reliability of our student loan programs, and give families the tools needed to make informed choices about their college education.

Fighting for Better Food Security

It's hard to believe that in the world's wealthiest nation, children still go to bed each night hungry. But sadly, in the land of plenty, almost 36 million Americans are food insecure - meaning they live in constant fear of going hungry. With food prices rising, this is sure to become an even greater problem.

That is why I supported the **2008 Farm Bill**, which became law in June. Under this historic legislation, roughly \$215 billion will go to nutritional programs and help 38 million Americans afford healthy food. It improves food stamp benefits and school lunch programs that will serve about 11 million people by 2012.

The Farm Bill also aids food banks and soup kitchens by boosting their funding by \$1.25 billion. **This will directly impact The Food Bank of the Rio Grande Food Valley, which is Texas's 4th largest food bank.**

This bill, of course, will not solve all of America's food and hunger problems. But it is a step in the right direction.



Congressman Hinojosa meets with children at El Tule Boys and Girls Club in Edinburg at the announcement of a major food donation to the Rio Grande Valley Food Bank.

Bringing Better Healthcare to Coastal Bend

There are few areas more affected by the nationwide shortage of nurse professionals than the rural areas of the Coastal Bend. To help mitigate this problem, I have been working with Coastal Bend College and a Tri-County Consortium to come up with creative solutions to solve our healthcare needs.

I am pleased to announce that we have made great strides in our efforts. For the first time, Coastal Bend College will begin offering two-year registered nurse courses in Beeville and Alice this year.

Congressman Hinojosa has Secured Millions in Federal Funding for the 15th District:

- \$23.3 million for the Donna-Rio Bravo International Bridge. The bridge will serve as a conduit for increased U.S.-Mexico trade.
- \$1 million for Three Rivers for wastewater treatment plant.
- \$5 million federal grant for the the North American Advanced Manufacturing Research and Education initiative (NAMREI), which will help develop the rapid response manufacturing in the valley.
- \$633,000 for Alamo, La Feria, and Mercedes in rural business development grants to provide services to local businesses.
- \$1 million for La Feria for expansion of wastewater infrastructure.